



**Cal EMA**  
CALIFORNIA EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT AGENCY

## NEWS RELEASE

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 20, 2010

### **Cal EMA CONTACT**

Greg Renick, Information Officer - (562) 577-8503

[Media@calema.ca.gov](mailto:Media@calema.ca.gov)

## **Cal EMA Coordinates Flood Response Efforts with Local, State, Feds As Series of Storms Continue Throughout State**

MATHER, Calif.—The California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA) continues to coordinate response with its local, state and federal partners in preparation for additional inclement weather later this week. The current weather system has included heavy rain in Southern California, up to six feet of snow in the Eastern Sierra, up to two feet of snow in some Southern California mountain areas, 60-mile-per-hour winds in the mountains and tides of up to six feet along the coast.

In addition to coordinating with its local, state and federal partners, Cal EMA has worked with Los Angeles County and the California National Guard to extend the operating hours of existing winter shelters at armories in Los Angeles County to 24-hour operation until Thursday. The Department of Water Resources will provide 48,000 sandbags to Kern County. The California Conservation Corps also has 38 crews ready to respond immediately in multiple locations around the state.

McFarland, in Kern County, evacuated 2,000 residents earlier today in the area east of Highway 99, west of Wiley and south of Elmo. Shelters are currently open in Los Angeles, Kern, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties.

"Protecting lives, property and the environment is the number one priority of Cal EMA and our partner agencies," said Cal EMA Secretary Matthew Bettenhausen. "Flooding has already occurred in some areas of the California. If the National Weather Service's forecast for the next several days holds true, many more communities could be at risk. It's important that everyone—government agencies at all levels, community based organizations, businesses and individuals—do all they can to prepare.

Because this past week's rains have saturated the soils in many communities, he urged Californians living outside the recent burn areas as well as within them to learn the signs of potential mud and debris flows, including faint rumbling sounds that increase in volume, the sound of cracking tree limbs and boulders knocking together.

"If you can," said Bettenhausen, "consider leaving and staying elsewhere."

If you do leave, disconnect your appliances, and shut off the gas at the meter and your electricity at the fuse panel if your local utility directs you to do so. Move valuables to the upper floors of your home. Let others know where you're going.

**-MORE-**

**-2-2-2-**

Secretary Bettenhausen urged those who opt to leave to avoid areas that are subject to flooding such as rivers, stream and flood control channels and to avoid driving over flooded roads.

"Abandon your car immediately and move to higher ground immediately if your car stalls," said Bettenhausen.

If you are unable to leave, move to an upper floor and try to stay awake and alert. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, many debris-flow related deaths occur while people are sleeping. If you are unable to evacuate and do not have an upper floor, curl into a tight ball and protect your head.

For more information on Flood Preparedness, visit FEMA's site at <http://www.ready.gov/america/beinformed/floods.html>.

For more information on Mudslide or Landslide Preparedness visit the California Department of Public Health <http://bepreparedcalifornia.ca.gov/EPO/BeInformed/NaturalDisasters/Landslides+and+Mudslides.htm>.

# # #